

Fact Sheet

November 2003

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

What Is WHIP?

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill) reauthorized the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). WHIP is a voluntary program to assist landowners in creating, restoring and enhancing wildlife habitat primarily on private lands. It provides both technical assistance and cost-share payments to help establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat.

How Does WHIP Work?

In order to develop and implement WHIP in Rhode Island, a statewide WHIP Plan was developed. The state plan objectives are to improve wildlife habitats in the state using an ecosystem management approach through:

- Restoration of significantly important natural habitats
- Proper management of human influenced habitats, such as agricultural land

What Types Of Habitats And Projects Are Eligible In Rhode Island?

- Coastal Wetlands & Eelgrass Meadows
- Freshwater Wetlands & Riparian Buffers
- Fish Passage Restoration
- Early Successional Upland Habitats-Native Grasslands

Who Is Eligible To Participate?

To participate, a person must either own the land on which WHIP will be implemented, or have control and possession of the land for the duration of the WHIP contract. The land cannot be owned by a federal agency or have on-site or off-site conditions that would undermine the successful re-establishment of habitat development practices.

When And How Can I Apply?

Applications for WHIP can be completed at any time for FY2004 funding. To apply, simply call **401.828.1300** or walk in and ask for a WHIP application, fill it out and mail it back to **USDA NRCS, 60 Quaker Lane, Suite 46, Warwick, RI 02886**.

How Will WHIP Requests Be Handled?

Each potential WHIP project will be evaluated and prioritized using the Rhode Island WHIP ranking system. The ranking system criteria will evaluate each project based on its ecological, economic, and social benefits. If your project is approved for funding you will be notified and a WHIP Plan will be developed for you within the next 30 days.

What Is A Wildlife Habitat Development Plan?

The plan describes the landowner's goals for improving wildlife habitat, includes a list of practices and a schedule for installing them, and details the steps necessary to maintain the habitat for the life of the agreement. This plan can be part of a larger conservation plan to address other resource needs, such as water quality and soil erosion.

How Does Cost-Sharing Work?

Cost-share assistance will be used to implement the practices contained in the Wildlife Habitat Development Plan. NRCS will cost-share up to 75% of the cost of installing or implementing a practice. Some practices are paid at a flat rate. If a practice fails for reasons beyond a participant's control (such as drought or flood), cost-share assistance may be available for the re-establishment of the necessary practices.

How Can I Learn More About WHIP?

Questions about WHIP may be addressed to:

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